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Assessment
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Latin America Review

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LATIN AMERICA REVIEW

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Decision [REDACTED] 1

The military regime has announced another new labor policy in an effort to avert the threatened boycott, but union and government leaders still differ over the proper definition of labor freedom. [REDACTED]

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Colombia: Major Arms Theft by Guerrilla

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Group [REDACTED] 5

The arms theft last week by the 19th of April Movement (M-19) is clearly an embarrassment to the military and poses potentially serious consequences for the Turbay administration. [REDACTED]

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Chile: Labor Movement Close to Boycott Decision

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For the second time within the last 90 days, the Chilean military regime has made a public move to avert a threatened boycott by the Regional Inter-American Labor Organization (ORIT), in which the AFL-CIO has the strongest voice. The new labor policy, announced on 2 January, sets forth guidelines for the resumption of trade union activities, which have been banned for the last five years in Chile. These guidelines will be assessed at an ORIT meeting on 15 January, but may not be acceptable for a number of reasons, including differing views over what are the proper limits of labor freedom. If ORIT decides to go ahead with the boycott, it could hurt the export-oriented Chilean economy and cause some loss to the US whose annual exports to Chile total about \$600 million. It may also further damage US-Chilean relations and could widen the gap between the military regime and its domestic opposition.

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Background

3
During the last year, bargaining between ORIT, whose principal negotiators have been AFL-CIO leaders, and the military regime has been approaching a climax. The AFL-CIO's allies in Chile are the so-called Group of Ten, a body of non-Communist labor leaders who favored the coup against Allende. They were also early supporters of the Pinochet regime, which they expected would move quickly to restore union freedoms, but their enthusiasm waned as the regime continued to temporize. Although the government finally agreed that a normalization of labor relations would take place in 1979, ORIT and the Group of Ten did not wait to see if the latest promise would be fulfilled. Instead, they tried to force the regime to take concrete action by threatening a boycott. The Chilean Government responded last October with hurriedly called and clumsily handled elections in about 20 percent of the nation's local unions. These elections, and the decree laws authorizing them were

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sharply criticized by the Group of Ten and by ORIT, which proceeded to vote in November to go ahead with the boycott. [REDACTED]

3 In conflicts with foreign governments and international bodies, the Chilean regime usually tries to win popular support, weaken its domestic political enemies, and gain the best negotiating stance against the outside adversary. When ORIT voted the boycott of Chile (along with Cuba and Nicaragua), the regime reacted characteristically, protesting the action, vowing resistance, and appealing for mass backing. At the same time, however, it commissioned studies to find ways to circumvent the boycott and to calculate its potential costs. Whatever the conclusions of the official studies--some reportedly found that a boycott would "inconvenience" but not seriously damage the country--the regime evidently decided that avoiding the boycott would be best and moved to try to forestall it. After several informal meetings with high-level intermediaries, the AFL-CIO agreed to delay a December meeting at which ways to carry out the boycott were to have been discussed. Later that month, a cabinet shakeup brought in six new ministers, including a new Minister of Labor, Jose Pinera, who soon advanced a new labor policy. [REDACTED]

The New Labor Plan

/ The new plan, and even its mode of presentation all involved some obvious concessions to ORIT and to critics on the domestic labor scene. The appointment of Pinera, a Harvard-educated economist, signaled that the regime's so-called "economic team" was now in charge of labor policy. The new policy, moreover, was first outlined before a gathering of businessmen and labor leaders, including some members of the Group of Ten, an audience that is usually off limits to government leaders. [REDACTED]

The plan itself--"for the establishment of a free, democratic, and financially strong labor movement"--set a deadline of 30 June for the return of collective bargaining, trade union elections, and the complete normalization of labor activity. It also provided that a majority vote of individual local unions could nullify the earlier, regime-sponsored elections. In addition, it eliminated a provision that had disqualified from union

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office anyone who had held political office in the last ten years. Finally, as a "measure of good faith," it gave all "legally recognized" unions the hitherto denied right of assembly. [REDACTED]

A week after the announcement, however, the Group of Ten declared its opposition, showing that the conflict was no longer one of timing but of substance. The military regime and its economic advisers have long wanted to depoliticize the labor movement to prevent the use of unions as a base of political opposition. The regime also does not want to grant labor any freedoms that might disrupt the productivity of Chile's present free-market economy. [REDACTED]

In this struggle for power and principle, differences seem to center on:

-- The right to strike. Although granted in principle, it is so highly qualified that opposition leaders claim it can rarely, if ever, be realized in practice. [REDACTED]

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-- Collective bargaining. The new plan apparently contains ample provisions for settlement of disputes including arbitration and conciliation, but the opposition fears that many small unions, as well as federations and confederations, will be excluded from the process. [REDACTED]

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-- Dues Checkoffs. Although permitted for local unions, dues checkoffs are denied to larger labor groups, and without these checkoffs the opposition believes the federations and confederations cannot survive. [REDACTED]

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-- Freedom of assembly. Opposition leaders feel this right will be circumscribed both by existing decrees and by interpretations of what constitutes a "legally recognized" union. [REDACTED]

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-- Status of present unions and officeholders. Labor leaders believe they will not be allowed to be candidates for union offices, and that some of their organizations will not be recognized under new labor laws. [REDACTED]

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25X1 These doubts, and others, led the Group of Ten, which represents about a third of Chile's one million previously organized workers, to oppose the new labor plan. [REDACTED]

Prospects

2 Without question, the ORIT leaders who meet next week will be heavily influenced by opposition from the Group of Ten. Before then, there is still some time for further maneuvering and one more postponement of the decision to implement the boycott is possible though doubtful. If, as seems more likely, the boycott is actually carried out, it could well bring serious consequences both inside and outside Chile. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Colombia: Major Arms Theft by Guerrilla Group

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1, 2 A major arms theft last week by the 19th of April movement (M-19)--perhaps the most volatile of Colombia's numerous guerrilla groups--is clearly an embarrassment for the military, enhances the prestige of M-19, increases the climate of insecurity in the country, and poses potentially serious consequences for the Turbay administration. After tunneling under a street in Bogota and into a military armory, the M-19 made off with an estimated 5,000 weapons, possibly including mortars and rocket launchers as well as machineguns and ammunition. [REDACTED]

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Background of M-19

3 M-19 takes its name from the date of the presidential election of 19 April 1970--which ex-dictator Rojas Pinilla and his National Popular Alliance Party (ANAPO) lost because of fraudulent balloting. The group emerged in 1974 when ANAPO split between traditionalists who wanted to remain a separate party, and young leftists who wanted to radicalize by forming an alliance with one of the guerrilla or communist organizations. [REDACTED]

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3 Espousing a Trotskyite pro-Cuban ideology, the militant M-19 currently has some 200-300 members and is one of the country's most active insurgent groups. In an effort to confuse authorities, it has operated over the years under a variety of different names, engaging in urban guerrilla operations ranging from the highly publicized stealing of the sword of Simon Bolivar to raising funds through extortion, kidnappings, and robberies. [REDACTED]

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3 The group is considered particularly dangerous because of its demonstrated ability to carry out political assassinations such as the murder of a prominent Colombian labor leader in 1976 and the machine-gunning of a high-ranking army general last year. [REDACTED]

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Developments Since the Theft

2 Following the arms robbery, M-19 issued a communique that took responsibility for the operation and demanded agrarian reform, salary increases for workers, an end to the state of siege, and abrogation of the security statute--a recently promulgated law that imposes more severe sentences for civil unrest and places crimes against state security under military jurisdiction. [REDACTED]

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4, 1 In response, authorities launched an immediate drive to recover the weapons and apprehend known M-19 members. In the course of their search, army and police units chanced upon the M-19 "people's prison" where a kidnaped Texaco executive had been held since last May. During the ensuing clash, the Texaco representative was murdered by his captors, who in turn either committed suicide or were killed by authorities. That raid, however, coupled with the discovery of other subversive hideouts, yielded a large volume of documents that shed additional light on the M-19. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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3, 6, 1 Part of M-19s overall goal may be to unite the ideologically disparate guerrillas into a national insurgent movement. To date, however, there have been only sporadic and minor instances of cooperation among the groups. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Many M-19 members have exhibited a strong degree of fanaticism. Rather than be captured, they have frequently tried to commit suicide or have virtually forced the authorities to kill them. While the guerrillas may fear physical abuse and torture by the authorities, their actions also reflect a determination and commitment that could lead to carry out extraordinary kamikaze-type missions. [REDACTED]

Status of the Weapons

8
The exact type and present location of the stolen armaments remain unknown. M-19 claims to have taken relatively heavy weapons such as mortars and rocket launchers. The military--perhaps to attenuate its own humiliation--maintains that no Army weapons were lost and that M-19 only got a collection of assorted--in many cases obsolete--small arms confiscated from private individuals. Clearly, however, a large number of weapons were taken and it is likely that some military hardware was included. [REDACTED]

9
[REDACTED] Since the number of weapons taken by M-19 greatly exceeds its membership, it is probable that some of the equipment will either be given or traded to other insurgent groups or will be sold to criminals. [REDACTED]

Implications for the Turbay Administration

3
In recent years, Colombian officials have become increasingly concerned not only by the bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations perpetrated by the country's

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3 insurgents, but also by the general social unrest exemplified by dissident students and striking workers. These factors, coupled with inflation and other economic problems, are viewed by military and civilian leaders alike as a potential threat to Colombia's stability. In order to control the escalating problems of common crime, terrorism, rampant drug smuggling, and subversion, the Turbay administration recently promulgated a stringent security law providing not only stiffer prison sentences for specific crimes such as kidnaping, but also regulating radio and television broadcasts "relative to public order." [REDACTED]

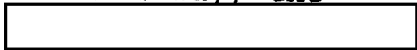
3 The actions of M-19 obviously fly in the face of President Turbay's law-and-order crackdown. Despite the discovery of the "people's prison" and the arrest of numerous suspected subversives, the M-19 operation is nevertheless a significant victory--if only in terms of publicity--for the guerrillas. The government in general, and the military in particular, can still minimize that victory if the stolen weapons actually prove to be inconsequential and if the subversives thus far arrested prove to be the ones directly involved in the robbery. [REDACTED]

3 It is more likely, however, that M-19 did get away with some military weapons. It is also likely that these weapons will be used in subsequent actions against military and police units. This could set off a spiral of assault and reprisal, with insurgents and security forces taking increased toll on each other's ranks, and probably on innocent bystanders as well. The greater availability of guns and munitions could spawn not only a proliferation of newly armed leftists, but also provide drug smugglers with a more forceful means of resistance, especially against the military's antinarco-tics campaign in the Guajira. [REDACTED]

3 The Colombian Government--in years past a model in terms of adhering to the principles of human rights--has recently come under criticism for alleged torture of prisoners by police and military and for the reputedly heavyhanded nature of Turbay's law-and-order campaign. Ironically, the greatest consequence of the arms theft may not be on internal security per se, but on the way the government's handling of the problem is perceived. [REDACTED]

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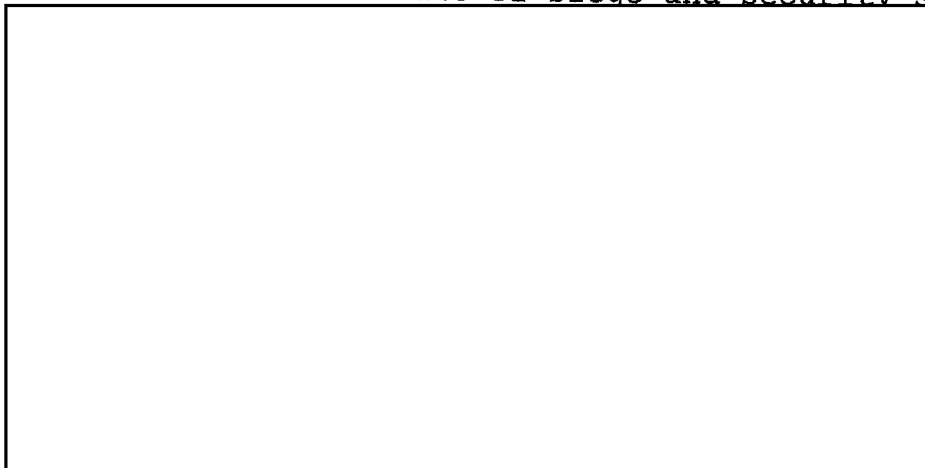
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3 If the government fails to respond forcefully, it will be criticized by rightwing political factions, the military establishment, wealthy businessmen and industrialists, and other traditional targets of insurgent actions. If the government reacts decisively and strongly, unleashing the full force of the military and police against M-19 and other guerrilla groups, it runs the risk of precipitating a bloodbath and of engendering harsh criticism from civil libertarians and those concerned with human rights violations. Either way, the burden will be on President Turbay. 

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3 Since taking office last August, Turbay has demonstrated a resolve, as well as the ability, to meet his campaign pledge to restore order to Colombia. The M-19 incident is a setback for him, but it probably will reinforce his determination to gain control over the insurgents. We believe, therefore, that Turbay will react forcefully, albeit carefully, and that in the coming weeks and months he will utilize all measures available to him under the state of siege and security statute.

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FOR THE RECORD [REDACTED]

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1, 2 ARGENTINA-CHILE: In exchange for Vatican mediation of the Beagle Channel dispute, Cardinal Samore has extracted from Argentina and Chile a promise not to resort to force, to return to the military deployment that existed at the beginning of 1977, and to abstain from any provocative actions. Presumably these pledges will obtain throughout the mediation effort. [REDACTED]

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1, 2 Up to now the Argentines have insisted on a division of the disputed islands as a precondition for mediation. The dropping of this precondition is at least a momentary political victory for Argentine President Videla, who has argued vigorously for a diplomatic solution in spite of the strenuous objections by hardline military leaders. The officers will closely follow the mediation to ensure that Argentina's maritime claims in the disputed area are respected. If they are not, Videla will be held strictly accountable. [REDACTED]

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2 The Chileans may view the mediation as a further opportunity for foot-dragging. Continued Chilean intransigence could cause the mediation to fail and rekindle demands of Argentine hardliners for a military solution. [REDACTED]

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CUBAN CHRONOLOGY
(UNCLASSIFIED)

For December 1978

- 4 December Carlos Rafael Rodriguez is host at a reception for visiting Iraqi trade union delegation which attended CTC Congress.
- 5 December Fidel Castro speaks at builders' day ceremony in Cienfuegos.
- 6 December Army general Raul Castro meets with Beninese Defense Force delegation headed by Col. Richard Rodriguez.
- 7 December Iraqi military delegation headed by Brig. Gen. Tareq Shukri meets with Div. Gen. Senen Casas Regueiro.
- 8 December Fidel Castro presides over second round of talks between Cuban exile representatives and Cuban Government officials.
- 9 December Carlos Rafael Rodriguez meets with Carlos Victor De Carvalho, Governor of the Angolan National Bank.
- Fidel Castro holds lengthy news conference with a group of exile newsmen. He says that Cuba has had the MIG-23 for over a year.
- The Cuban Government announces that 1,500 former political prisoners and their families will go to Venezuela before Christmas.

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9 December The Second Che Guevara Internationalist Teaching Brigade holds public meeting to affirm its intention to serve in Angola for two years.

11 December Cuban foreign trade delegation arrives in Maputo, Mozambique to discuss expanding trade.

11-13 December Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visits Moscow and meets with Chairman Kosygin on 12 December.

Cuban Communist Party delegation visits Guyana. Ulises Estrada meets with Prime Minister Burnham.

12 December French-Cuban mixed commission meets in Paris. Hector Rodriguez Llompart heads Cuban delegation.

In Moscow, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez meets with Iraqi leader Saddam Husayn Al-Tikriti.

12-15 December National seminar of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) held in Havana.

12-18 December Costa Rican Legislative Assembly delegation visits Cuba.

13 December Saddam Husayn Al-Tikriti, vice-chairman of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council arrives in Havana at the invitation of Fidel Castro.

16 December A new group of 120 Cuban doctors and specialists arrives in Ethiopia. They are met by Raul Curbelo Morales, head of Cuban civilians in Ethiopia.

16-20 December Annual meeting of National Revolutionary Police (PNR) chiefs takes place in Havana.

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17 December Cuba and Iraq sign economic cooperation agreement in Havana.

19-21 December Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) holds national plenum in Havana chaired by Vilma Espin.

20 December Fidel Castro meets with Lansana Diane, representative of Guinean Democratic Party Politburo, who brings message from Guinean President Sekou Toure.

Agreement is signed with government of Iraq that will provide Cuban health technicians for service in Iraq.

20-22 December Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visits Portugal. Meets with President Eanes.

21 December Manuel Pineiro, head of PCC America Department, meets with delegation from Puerto Rican Socialist Party headed by Juan Mari Bras.

22 December Fidel Castro chairs 7th plenum of Cuban Communist Party Central Committee. Economic plan and national budget for next year are submitted.

23 December Technical advisory board of the State Committee for Science and Technology is established by Council vice president Jose Fernandez.

Cuba and Albania sign trade protocol for 1979.

25 December Cuba and Vietnam sign economic, scientific, and technical cooperation agreement.

27 December The Council of State decrees official three-day mourning period for death of Algerian President Boumediene.

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28 December - Second session of Peoples Government
1 January National Assembly held in Havana.
National budget for 1979 is submitted
and approved.

29 December Soviet Deputy Defense Minister Marshal
Sokolov arrives in Cuba for 20th an-
niversary celebration. He is greeted
by Raul Castro.

Cuban Party and Government delegation
headed by Vice President Juan Almeida
and Politburo member Armando Hart ar-
rive in Algiers for funeral of Presi-
dent Boumediene.

30 December In Algiers, Cuban Vice President
Juan Almeida meets with Guinea-Bissau
President Luis Cabral.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Simon
Consalvi arrives in Cuba to attend
20th anniversary celebration.

31 December Cuban Government announces release of
400 former political prisoners. This
is the first group out of 3,600 Cuba
has said it will free.

All of the information in this article is unclassified.

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